



## FDA authorizes 1st COVID-19 shots for infants, preschoolers

By LINDSEY TANNER  
AP Medical Writer

U.S. regulators on Friday authorized the first COVID-19 shots for infants and preschoolers, paving the way for vaccinations to begin next week.

The Food and Drug Administration's action follows its advisory panel's unanimous recommendation for the shots from Moderna and Pfizer. That means U.S. kids under 5 — roughly 18 million youngsters — are eligible for the shots. The nation's vaccination campaign began about 1 1/2 years ago with older adults, the hardest hit during the coronavirus pandemic.

There's one step left: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends how to use vaccines. Its independent

advisers began debating the two-dose Moderna and the three-dose Pfizer vaccines on Friday and will make its recommendation Saturday. A final signoff is expected soon after from CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky.

At a Senate hearing Thursday, Walensky said her staff was working over the Juneteenth federal holiday weekend "because we understand the urgency of this for American parents." She said pediatric deaths from COVID-19 have been higher than what is generally seen from the flu each year. "So I actually think we need to protect young children, as well as protect everyone with the vaccine and especially protect elders," she said.

Continued on next page



This May 2022 photo provided by Pfizer shows production of the Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine for children under 5 in Puurs, Belgium.

Associated Press

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TICO KOCK STEEL DRUM 4 - 6pm	ANGELA FLORES VIOLINIST 6:30 - 8:30pm	JEAN PAUL SAXOPHONIST 6:30 - 8:30pm	CARLOS ORLATE SINGER 6:30 - 8:30pm	MARRYBELL MADURO SINGER 6:30 - 8:30pm	RICKY THOMAS GUITAR 7 - 9pm	ANGELA FLORES VIOLINIST 6:30 - 8:30pm

MARRYBELL MADURO  
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**Happy Hour**  
12-1 / 4-6 / 9-10

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PREMIUM  
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KARAOKE  
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**Continued from Front**

The FDA also authorized Moderna's vaccines for school-aged children and teens; CDC's review is next week. Pfizer's shots had been the only option for those age groups.

For weeks, the Biden administration has been preparing to roll out the vaccines for little kids, with states, tribes, community health centers and pharmacies preordering millions of doses. With FDA's emergency use authorization, manufacturers can begin shipping vaccine across the country. The shots are expected to start early next week but it's not clear how popular they will be.

Without protection for their tots, some families had put off birthday parties, vacations and visits with grandparents.

"Today is a day of huge relief for parents and families across America," President Joe Biden said in a statement.

While young children generally don't get as sick from COVID-19 as older kids and adults, their hospitalizations surged during the omicron wave and FDA's advisers determined that benefits from vaccination outweighed the minimal risks. Studies from Moderna and Pfizer showed side effects, including fever and fatigue, were mostly minor. "As we have seen with older age groups, we expect that the vaccines for younger children will provide protection from the most severe outcomes of COVID-19, such as hospitalization and death," FDA



**Syringes and colorful bandages are prepared as children from local schools prepare to get COVID-19 vaccines in Pittsfield, Mass., on Monday Dec. 13, 2021.**

**Associated Press**

Commissioner Robert Califf said in a statement.

In testing, the littlest children developed high levels of virus-fighting antibodies, comparable to what is seen in young adults, the FDA said. Moderna's vaccine was about 40% to 50% effective at preventing infections but there were too few cases during Pfizer's study to give a reliable, exact estimate of effectiveness, the agency said.

"Both of these vaccines have been authorized with science and safety at the forefront of our minds," Dr. Peter Marks, FDA's vaccine chief, said at a news briefing.

Marks said parents should feel comfortable with either vaccine, and should get their kids vaccinated as soon as possible, rather

than waiting until fall, when a different virus variant might be circulating. He said adjustments in the vaccines would be made to account for that.

"Whatever vaccine your health care provider, pediatrician has, that's what I would give my child," Marks said.

The two brands use the same technology but there are differences.

Pfizer's vaccine for kids younger than 5 is one-tenth of the adult dose. Three shots are needed: the first two given three weeks apart and the last at least two months later.

Moderna's is two shots, each a quarter of its adult dose, given about four weeks apart for kids under 6. The FDA also authorized a third dose, at least a month

after the second shot, for children who have immune conditions that make them more vulnerable to serious illness.

Both vaccines are for children as young as 6 months. Moderna next plans to study its shots for babies as young as 3 months. Pfizer has not finalized plans for shots in younger infants. A dozen countries, including China, already vaccinate kids under 5, with other brands.

Immediately upon hearing of the FDA's decision, Dr. Toma Omofoye, a Houston radiologist, made appointments for her 4-year-old daughter and 3-year-old son. Without the shots, her family has missed out on family gatherings, indoor concerts, even trips to the grocery store, she

said. During a recent pharmacy stop, Omofoye said her daughter stared and walked around like it was Disneyland, and thanked her.

"My heart broke in that moment, which is why my heart is so elated now," Omofoye said.

But will other parents be as eager to get their youngest vaccinated? By some estimates, three-quarters of all U.S. children have already been infected. And only about 30% of children aged 5 to 11 have gotten vaccinated since Pfizer's shots opened to them last November.

The FDA officials acknowledged those low rates and said the government is committed to getting more older kids vaccinated and having better success with younger kids.

"It's a real tragedy, when you have something free with so few side effects that prevents deaths and hospitalization," Califf said.

Roughly 440 children under age 5 have died from COVID-19, federal data show. Dr. Beth Ebel of the University of Washington School of Medicine in Seattle, said the tot-sized vaccines would be especially welcomed by parents with children in day care where outbreaks can sideline parents from jobs, adding to financial strain.

"A lot of people are going to be happy and a lot of grandparents are going to be happy, too, because we've missed those babies who grew up when you weren't able to see them," Ebel said. □



**First lady Jill Biden speaks at the 125th Anniversary Convention of the National Parent Teacher Association (PTA) in National Harbor, Md., Friday, June 17, 2022.**

**Associated Press**

## Jill Biden: 'It's up to Congress to act' on gun safety laws

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — First lady Jill Biden, a longtime teacher, said Friday she's often wondered if her own students would be the next "heartbreaking headline" as she urged parents and teachers to speak up and demand that Congress pass tougher gun safety measures.

"There are no excuses. It's up to Congress to act," Biden said in a speech to the National PTA Conven-

tion meeting in a Maryland suburb of Washington. "And they represent the will of the people and that's why we need the people to speak up.

Parents and teachers, all of us."

"We need to fight, now, for the lives of our children and for the safety of our schools," she said.

The first lady, who has taught for nearly 40 years and teaches English and

writing at Northern Virginia Community College, said she often imagines the terrifying scene of a school shooter playing out in her own classroom.

She said she explains to her students on the first day of class how they can escape "if the worst happens" and acknowledged that "I've wondered over the years if my students would be the next heartbreaking headline." □

By **DARLENE SUPERVILLE**

**Associated Press**



# California bill would reduce single-use plastic products 25%

By KATHLEEN RONAYNE

Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP)

— An ambitious California proposal aims to reduce plastic production for single-use products like shampoo bottles and food wrappers by 25% starting next decade, part of an effort to rein in pollution from the ubiquitous material.

A bill introduced late Thursday aims to bring environmental and business groups together to avoid a similar ballot measure slated to go before voters in November. But at least two of the ballot measure's three proponents aren't yet on board.

Democratic Sen. Ben Allen, the bill's author, said that if passed the proposal would make California a leader in reducing plastic waste by focusing on eliminating plastic at the source, not just recycling it once produced.

"The truth is we just need less crap out there — less plastic out there in general," Allen said Friday.

Plastics have long been a target of environmental groups. Most plastic is not recycled and millions of tons are polluting the world's oceans, hurting wildlife and showing up in



Plastic bottles of shampoo are displayed at Compton's Market in Sacramento, Calif., Friday, June 17, 2022.

Associated Press

drinking water. Various efforts are underway to rein in such pollution, with states attempting to reduce the use of plastic grocery bags, straws and other products. This month the federal government said it will phase out the sale of single-use plastics like water bottles at national parks.

Under the bill, the 25% reduction in plastic from single-use products would start in 2032. It would ap-

ply to producers of products like laundry detergent, toothpaste and food wrappings, as well as companies like Amazon that package products for mailing. They would have to replace the plastic with other materials, reduce their packaging or market the products as reusable and make it easy for consumers to do so. It wouldn't apply to water or other beverage bottles, which are regulated by dif-

ferent recycling laws.

Beyond plastic, producers of all single-use products, even those made of paper or glass, would need to ensure that 65% are recycled by 2032. It's estimated that less than 10% of plastic in the United States is recycled now.

Makers of single-use products would have to join "producer responsibility organizations" that would implement the rules with state

oversight. The organizations would have to collect \$500 million annually for a state plastic pollution mitigation fund. Producers that don't follow the rules could be fined \$50,000 a day.

The legislation was the product of long negotiations between Allen's office, environmental and business groups. Allen said he doesn't expect the plastics industry to support the bill. But he hopes they won't lobby against it because it may be more acceptable than the ballot measure and would mean they don't have to spend money trying to defeat it.

"While California businesses both large and small face a maze of environmental regulations as a result of this bill, we believe that this proposal ensures long term policy certainty around recycling and packaging," Jennifer Barrera, president of the California Chamber of Commerce, said in a statement.

Still, there was no immediate commitment from backers of the ballot measure to withdraw it. Ballot measures can be removed until June 30, meaning the bill would need to win quick passage. □

# Canceled flights rise across U.S. as summer travel heats up

By DAVID KOENIG

U.S. airlines canceled high numbers of flights for a second straight day on Friday as they tried to recover from storms while accommodating growing crowds of summer vacationers.

By early afternoon in the eastern U.S., airlines has scrubbed more than 1,100 flights after canceling more than 1,700 on Thursday, according to tracking service FlightAware.

Airports with the most cancellations included those in Charlotte, North Carolina, a major hub for American Airlines, LaGuardia and Newark Liberty in the New York City area, and Reagan Washington National outside Washington, D.C.

On Thursday, Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg held a virtual meeting

with airline CEOs to go over steps the airlines are taking to operate smoothly over the July 4 holiday and the rest of the summer, and to improve accommodation of passengers who get stranded when flights are canceled.

Over the Memorial Day holiday weekend that typically kicks off the summer travel season, airlines struggled with bad weather and shortages of workers, especially pilots, leading to widespread cancellations. Delta Air Lines, which canceled the most flights over the Memorial Day stretch, said Friday it has reduced cancellations by hiring more pilots and flight attendants and by scheduling crews to adjust more quickly to disruptions such as thunderstorms.

So far in June, more than 2.2 million travelers a day on average have gone through security checkpoints at U.S. airports. That's up 22% from a year ago although still down 13% from the same period before the pandemic.

There is some concern in the industry about ticket sales after Labor Day, when airlines become more dependent on business and international travel, both of which remain depressed. However, the outlook for leisure travel within the United States remains strong despite higher fares to cover rising fuel costs.

On Friday, Allegiant Air, a discount carrier that caters to vacationers, said that although it is early, bookings for trips after the summer are running above this time



Travelers queue up at the north security checkpoint in the main terminal of Denver International Airport, Thursday, May 26, 2022, in Denver.

Associated Press

in 2019.

Allegiant's update underscored a wild card still facing the airlines: COVID-19. The Las Vegas-based airline said that as coronavirus cases began rising in mid-May, it canceled more

flights because of absent crew members. Allegiant said those cancellations will cause second-quarter revenue to be at the low end of its previous forecast but still 28% higher than the same quarter in 2019. □



# Montana governor under fire for vacationing during flood

By MATTHEW BROWN and  
AMY BETH HANSON  
Associated Press

**RED LODGE, Mont. (AP)** — As punishing floods tore through Yellowstone National Park and neighboring Montana communities, the state's governor was nowhere to be seen.

In the immediate aftermath, the state issued a disaster declaration attributed to the Republican governor, but for some reason it carried the lieutenant governor's signature.

It wasn't until Wednesday — more than 48 hours after the flood hit the state — that Gov. Greg Gianforte's office acknowledged he was out of the country, though it wouldn't say exactly where he was, citing unspecified security concerns.

Gianforte finally returned on Thursday night from what his office said was a vacation with his wife in Italy. But he found himself facing a torrent of criticism for not hurrying home sooner and for not telling the public his whereabouts during the emergency.

"In a moment of unprecedented disaster and economic uncertainty, Gianforte purposefully kept Montanans in the



A sunken vehicle rests in front of home where volunteers are cleaning out a flooded basement Thursday, June 16, 2022, in Red Lodge, Mont.

dark about where he was and who was actually in charge," said Sheila Hogan, executive director of the Montana Democratic Party.

Gianforte, 61, is a tech mogul elected governor two years ago. He made headlines when he body-slammed a reporter the day before winning a seat in Congress in a 2017 special election. He initially misled investigators about the attack but eventually

pleaded guilty to misdemeanor assault.

While Gianforte was away, Montana's lieutenant governor served as acting governor.

And in Gianforte's defense, his office said he was briefed regularly about the flooding, which caused widespread damage to small communities in the southern part of the state and had threatened to cut off fresh water to Billings, the state's largest city.

But Gianforte's critics seized on his mysterious disappearance and started the mocking social media hashtag #WhereIsGreg. Montanans and others traded wisecracks about Gianforte and the Appalachian Trail — a reference to former South Carolina Gov. Mark Sanford, who disappeared in 2009 and had his staff tell reporters he was hiking the Appalachian Trail while he was actually having a tryst with his lover

Associated Press

in Argentina.

Montana reporters started asking more questions after noticing Lt. Gov. Kristen Juras' signature on the flood-disaster declaration.

"Truthfully, it speaks for itself. It just does," Democratic U.S. Sen. Jon Tester of Montana said of the governor's AWOL status as he toured flood damage in Red Lodge on Friday. "When you're in public service, there are things that take precedent, and this is pretty important."

Gianforte finally toured the flood zone Friday but didn't address his absence. He instead encouraged visitors to still come to the Yellowstone region.

"Here's a very simple message for people that have planned trips to Yellowstone Park: We're open. You've got to come. There's so much to do in Montana," he said. "The vitality of our communities depend on it, and your families need what we have in Montana." The floods washed away roads, bridges and houses and closed all of Yellowstone, threatening some of the communities on the park's outskirts that depend heavily on tourists visiting one of America's most beloved natural attractions. □

# Alaska officials release new details on milk, sealant mix-up



The Glacier Valley Elementary School is seen in Juneau, Alaska, on Tuesday, June 14, 2022.

Associated Press

**JUNEAU, Alaska (AP)** — School district officials in Alaska investigating how students at a summer child-care program were served floor sealant instead of milk say the two products were

not on the same pallet as first believed.

A number of agencies are involved in the ongoing investigation into Tuesday's incident at a summer program at a Juneau elemen-

tary school in which officials say 12 students and two adults drank the floor sealant.

Juneau School District chief of staff Kristin Bartlett said by email Friday that as the investigation has progressed, school officials "have been able to get clarification on some of the details of what happened."

The district in a statement late Thursday said it now understands that in the spring of 2021, a pallet of floor sealant was mistakenly delivered to a district food commodity warehouse at the same time as four pallets of shelf stable milk. The warehouse is intended for food items only.

"The pallet of floor sealant remained untouched in storage with other food

products until this week," when the district's food service contractor "ran short on milk and sent staff to retrieve shelf stable milk," the statement said.

On Tuesday, three boxes of floor sealant were picked up from the warehouse by the contractor, with one delivered to the summer program, the statement said. The others were delivered to two other schools and remained unopened, according to the statement.

Bartlett said the boxes "were marked with a label that said Seal 341."

According to the district statement, a worker with the contractor "took the box of floor sealant and poured its contents into cups to be served at break-

fast." Shortly after breakfast, students "complained of the 'milk' tasting bad" and burning their mouths and throats, and it was "quickly discovered" that what was served was a "slightly scented liquid floor sealant resembling milk."

"Staff immediately directed students to stop consuming the substance and removed it," the statement said.

Twelve students and two adults each ingested up to three ounces of the floor sealant, the statement said. Poison control was contacted for instructions, but the district said a delay in parental notification was "longer than it should have been" and caused families to learn of the incident from other sources. □



# UK. Govt. orders Julian Assange's extradition; appeal planned

By JILL LAWLESS  
Associated Press

**LONDON (AP)** — The British government on Friday ordered the extradition of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange to the United States to face spying charges, a milestone but not the end of a decade-long legal saga sparked by his website's publication of classified U.S. documents. WikiLeaks said it would challenge the order, and Assange's lawyers have 14 days to lodge an appeal. "We're not at the end of the road here," said Assange's wife, Stella Assange. "We're going to fight this."

Julian Assange has battled in British courts for years to avoid being sent to the U.S., where he faces 17 charges of espionage and one charge of computer misuse.

American prosecutors say the Australian citizen helped U.S. Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning steal classified diplomatic cables and military files that WikiLeaks later published, putting lives at risk.

To his supporters, Assange, 50, is a secrecy-busting journalist who exposed U.S. military wrongdoing in Iraq



WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange pauses as he makes a statement to media gathered outside the High Court in London, on Monday, Dec. 5, 2011.

Associated Press

and Afghanistan.

A British court ruled in April that Assange could be sent to face trial in the U.S., sending the case to the U.K. government for a decision. Britain's interior minister, Home Secretary Priti Patel, signed an order on Friday authorizing Assange's extradition.

The Home Office said in a statement that the government had to approve his move to the U.S. because "the U.K. courts have not

found that it would be oppressive, unjust or an abuse of process to extradite Mr. Assange."

Barry Pollack, Assange's U.S. lawyer, said it was "disappointing news that should concern anyone who cares about the First Amendment and the right to publish." Assange's lawyers said they would mount a new legal challenge, and legal experts say the case could take months or even years more to conclude.

"We will appeal this all the way, if necessary to the European Court of Human Rights," Assange attorney Jennifer Robinson said.

Robinson asked U.S. President Joe Biden to drop the charges brought against Assange during Donald Trump's presidency, arguing they posed a "grave threat" to free speech.

During a press conference outside the British Consulate in New York City, Assange's father, John Ship-

ton, also urged the U.S. to drop the prosecution.

"All it will take is a simple telephone call from Attorney General Merrick Garland to the home secretary in the United Kingdom to drop these charges. That's all it will take. It's not complex," he said.

Assange's supporters and lawyers maintain he was acting as a journalist and is entitled to First Amendment protections of freedom of speech. They argue that the case is politically motivated, that he would face inhumane treatment and be unable to get a fair trial in the U.S.

Silkie Carlo, director of civil liberties group Big Brother Watch, said the British government's "complicity in the political persecution of a journalist simply for revealing uncomfortable truths to the public is appalling, wrong and shames our country."

Stella Assange, a lawyer who married her husband in a prison ceremony in March, said the U.K. decision marked "a dark day for press freedom and for British democracy."

"Julian did nothing wrong," she said. "He has committed no crime and is not a criminal. □"

## Leaders meet in Madrid to mark world day to fight drought

By CIARÁN GILES  
Associated Press

**MADRID (AP)** — Politicians and experts met in Madrid on Friday to discuss ways to tackle drought and the increasing spread of deserts across the globe.

"The consequences of drought can affect up to three quarters of humanity by 2050. There is nowhere to hide if we are unable or unwilling to avert the severe alterations we are inflicting on the planet," Ibrahim Thiaw, executive secretary of the U.N. Convention to Combat Desertification, or UNCCD, said at the opening of the meeting.

"Let us be prepared to confront the new reality," he added.

The half-day meeting is being held to mark the United Nations' World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought.

Thiaw said half the world population was expected to face severe water scarcity in the next eight years, adding that that could lead to as many as 700 million people or about 10% of the world's population being at risk of being displaced during that period. The meeting brought together numerous experts, including Kenya's Patricia Kombo, founder of the PaTree Initiative to help Kenya achieve 10% forest cover by getting students to plant trees.

"I know majority of you have never come across

drought," said Kombo. "But I would like to tell you how drought feels like. Clean and safe drinking water is like a diamond. Three meals a day is a dream."

She said communities had turned to violence because of the lack of food and water.

"You are fighting for the only available resources," she said. "We are fighting for water."

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez spoke at the meeting and U.N. Secretary General António Guterres was to make an address by video.

The UNCCD says that between 1900 and 2019, droughts have impacted 2.7 billion people in the

world, and caused 11.7 million deaths.

Spain's Ecological Transition ministry says 75% of Spanish land is vulnerable to desertification and this is increasing.

The meeting comes as

Spain is suffering an unusually early heat wave that has helped fuel wildfires across the country.

The focus of the meeting will be on encouraging early action to prevent disastrous outcomes. □



Roots are photographed near the old village of Aceredo in northwestern Spain, Friday, Feb. 11, 2022.

Associated Press



# Pakistan to stay on terror financing watchdog's 'gray list'

**ISLAMABAD (AP)** — An international watchdog said Friday it will keep Pakistan on a so-called "gray list" of countries that do not take full measures to combat money laundering and terror financing but raised hopes that its removal would follow an upcoming visit to Islamabad to determine its progress.

The announcement by Marcus Pleyer, the president of the Financial Action Task Force, was a blow to Pakistan's newly elected government, which believes that it has mostly complied with the tasks set by the organization.

Expectations had been high in Pakistan that the FATF would announce its removal from the list at Friday's meeting in Berlin.

Instead, Pleyer said an on-site inspection by the FATF in Pakistan would take place before October, and that a formal announcement on Pakistan's removal would follow.

He praised Islamabad for implementing the organization's action plans a clear indication that Pakistan is moving closer to getting off the "gray list."

"Pakistan's continued political commitment to combating both terrorist financ-



A Pakistan watches news channel flashing news regarding FATF decision, at a market in Karachi, Pakistan, Friday, June 17, 2022.

Associated Press

ing and money laundering has led to significant progress," the FATF said in a statement, adding that Pakistan's "necessary political commitment remains in place to sustain implementation and improvement in the future."

Pakistan's foreign ministry said the FATF reviewed Pakistan's progress in counter-terror financing during a four-day meeting this week and "acknowledged the completion" of Pakistan's

action plans. It said a visit to Pakistan was authorized as a final step toward exiting from the "gray list."

Pakistan's Deputy Foreign Minister Hina Rabbani Khar, who attended the meeting in Berlin, said she was convinced that the process for Pakistan's removal from the list would begin later this year since Islamabad had fully complied with tasks set by the FATF in recent years. Also Friday, the FATF removed Malta from its "gray

list" but added Gibraltar. Pleyer urged Gibraltar to take steps in the right direction, including focusing on the gatekeepers to the financial system.

The watchdog also expressed concerns over the Russian invasion of Ukraine, offering "its deepest sympathies for the people of Ukraine" and saying it "continues to deplore the huge loss of life and needless destruction caused by the ongoing Russian inva-

sion."

Because of the invasion, the organization said Friday it has decided to severely limit Moscow's "role and influence within the FATF," which Russia joined in 2003. It was not immediately clear what that step entailed.

The Paris-based group added Pakistan in 2018 to the "gray list," which is composed of countries with a high risk of money laundering and terrorism financing but which have formally committed to working with the task force to make changes.

At the time, the south Asian country avoided being put on the organization's "black list" of countries that do not take adequate measures to halt money laundering and terror financing but also have not committed to working with the FATF.

The designation severely restricts a country's international borrowing capabilities.

Then-Prime Minister Imran Khan, who came to power in 2018, had hoped Pakistan would be removed from the list while he was in office and often stressed his administration's effort toward that goal. □

# Peruvian president faces investigation in corruption case



Peruvian President Pedro Castillo arrives to the special prosecutor office in Lima, Peru, Friday, June 17, 2022.

Associated Press

**LIMA, Peru (AP)** — Peruvian President Pedro Castillo appeared Friday before national prosecutors to face questions as part of an investigation against him in which he is accused of

being the leader of an alleged criminal conspiracy that received bribes for public works contracts.

Earlier, Castillo said on Twitter he sought to "clear up the accusations and

speculations ... in an act of transparency with the people and collaboration with the judiciary."

The president walked through the streets of Lima's historic downtown, including a main road where traffic was blocked. He was surrounded by security guards and anti-riot police, some on horseback and others on motorcycles.

Castillo shook the hands of several people present, but declined to answer questions from reporters.

Dozens of people shouted "criminal" at the president through megaphones, while others called on him to be incarcerated.

Prosecutors are also investigating the president's former transport minister, Juan Silva, and six lawmakers.

The investigation relates to an accusation that a criminal group led by Castillo had allegedly received benefits from works improperly allocated to some business leaders.

This marks the first time in Peru's history that the district attorney's office has investigated a sitting president.

Six former Peruvian presidents who led the country between 1985 and 2020 have been sentenced, indicted or investigated for corruption or money laundering. One of them, Alan García, who was president from 1985 to 1990 and then again from 2006 to 2011, killed himself before he could be detained as part of an investigation into bribes by the Brazilian con-

struction company Odebrecht.

In the 10 months he has been in office, Castillo has so far survived two impeachment efforts in Congress in what is the continuation of a political crisis that began in Peru in 2016 and has led to instability as well as five presidents and three dissolutions of Congress.

Polls show Peruvians are highly unhappy with both Castillo and Congress.

A May poll from the Peruvian Studies Institute shows Castillo suffers a 70% disapproval rating, while Congress stands at 87%. More than half of the population 67% believes that the best thing for the country would be for the president and Congress to resign so new elections can be held. □



# U.N.: Haiti police need immediate help amid surge in violence

By **EVENS SANON** and **DÁNICA COTO**

**PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP)**

— A U.N. special envoy warned Thursday that Haiti's police force needs immediate help to fight crime and violence, noting that gangs have grown so powerful they recently seized control of a local courthouse.

Helen La Lime, the top U.N. official in Haiti, said insecurity is rapidly deteriorating in the country of more than 11 million people, with an average of almost seven kidnappings reported a day.

In May alone, she said more than 200 killings and 198 abductions were reported. Those kidnappings included two busloads of children and three U.N. personnel and their dependents, with one local staff member killed in a crossfire between gangs, according to a U.N. Security Council report.

"The pervasive and deepening sense of insecurity, exacerbated by the (Haitian National Police's) seeming inability to address the situation and the manifest impunity with which criminal acts are being committed, is dangerously fraying the rule of law," said La Lime, who spoke at a U.N. Security Council meeting on Thursday.

The warning comes just days after a gang targeted the Court of First Instance in the capital of Port-au-



**A police officer patrols a street during an anti-gang operation in Croix-des-Missions, north of Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Thursday, April 28, 2022.**

Prince, looting and burning case files and pieces of evidence, she said. Authorities have identified the gang as "5 Seconds," which supposedly represents the amount of time it takes them to commit a crime. They control the Village de Dieu slum located in front of the courthouse they targeted.

Government Commissioner Jacques Lafontant told The Associated Press that he is still waiting for Haiti's National Police to go to the courthouse to assess the damage and ongoing situation.

"For now, it's clear that the place is under the control

of the gang," he said. Lafontant added that while services at the Court of First Instance were interrupted after the gang burst into the courthouse on Friday, they have temporarily resumed at another government building in the capital.

Meanwhile, Aine Martin, who oversees Haiti's association of court clerks, told the AP that the gang destroyed documents and barred lawyers and judges from reaching their offices. He said authorities are still trying to remove a huge safe from the courthouse that contains important documents and evidence

including guns and money. He declined to provide details about the case files, including whether any are related to the investigation into the July 7 assassination of President Jovenel Moïse that remains stalled.

"These groups are being guided by an invisible hand to destroy sensitive documents," he said, declining to identify who he thinks might be giving orders to gangs.

Fondasyon Je Klere, a human rights group based in Haiti, said employees, lawyers, defendants and others were able to save themselves by climbing walls and receiving help

from police the day the gang attacked the courthouse.

The organization added that one person was injured by a bullet as gangs stole seven cars and equipment including computers, chairs and air conditioners. Three days later, the furniture was seen on display along a nearby street for sale, the rights group said. It noted that the court takeover occurred days after criminals took over the nearby building of the Center for Planning Techniques and Applied Economics.

Before the gang burst into the courthouse, lawyer unions and others had been protesting what they said was a lack of security as they demanded more protection. Meanwhile, court clerks launched a countrywide strike in mid-April that lasted more than a month.

U.N. officials note that Haitian police have arrested hundreds of suspected gang members and killed more than 120 others, as well as seized several hundred firearms and increased checkpoints and patrols. They added that while various countries including the U.S. have provided training and equipment, the department remains understaffed and under resourced, with only 12,800 active police officers for a country of more than 11 million people. □

**Associated Press**

## Building collapse kills 6 in Egyptian capital of Cairo

By **AHMED HATEM**

**Associated Press**

**CAIRO (AP)** — A building collapse early on Friday in the Egyptian capital of Cairo killed six people, authorities said, as rescuers at the scene searched through the rubble.

It was not immediately known what caused the collapse.

The city's deputy governor, Ibrahim Abdel-Hadi, said in a statement released by the Interior Ministry that one family of six was believed to have been inside the

six-story building in the el-Waily neighborhood when it gave way in the early hours of the morning.

He said workers were continuing to search through in the rubble.

People were also asked to leave the surrounding buildings because of structural concerns.

Bulldozers and diggers were still lifting debris at the scene on Friday afternoon. A neighboring building had lost part of a wall, exposing the interior of an apartment.

Building collapses are common in Egypt, where shoddy construction and lack of maintenance is widespread in shantytowns, poor city neighborhoods and rural areas.

The country's government has tried to crack down on illegal building in recent years after decades of lax enforcement.

But the megacity still contains entire neighborhoods of unlicensed red brick apartment buildings and shantytowns. □



**Residents and rescue workers sift through the rubble of a collapsed building in El-Weili neighborhood, Cairo, Egypt, Friday, June 17, 2022.**

**Associated Press**



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It was 1938 when Mr. Eric Ponson started his journey at General Store. Ponson did not hesitate and decided to buy General Store. Buying a store and thus going from employee to owner of a business with a debt of 11.000 guilders was not an easy task.

As the saying goes: "Behind every successful man, is a strong woman". In the case of Ponson, this was no different. As General Store progressed and slowly became successful, Mrs. Irene Ponson, came in to assist her husband. Irene Ponson is a visionary, she knew exactly where and how to invest and within a short amount of time in 1970, General Store moved to a better location at the Steenweg. This allowed for a lot more merchandise, products and employees. Supply and demand was as such, that General Store became the number 1 electrical business. Business

kept going so well that the location at the Steenweg became too small and was moved later to Dakota Shopping Paradise and later to Pedro Gallego Straat. With this move, an expansion was decided upon and an electronics store in Savaneta was opened. General Store still being very successful was ready for more growth.

Ricky, Kenneth, Corine and Frans are the fruits of this marriage. Kenneth and Frans however, decided to further develop their father's legacy and continued with their mother's dream to expand the business. An expansion not in square feet only, but in merchandise as well. A great opportunity presented itself when the Ponson family was able to buy a piece of property across from the airport. In 2007 the Ponson family moved into their brand new and huge building. Ponson's General Store now had an electrical department, as housewares department, a paint department and a hardware department.

After a successful opening and expansion, Kenneth and Frans who inherited their mothers vision, decided that General Store was ready for yet another expansion.

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Join us this Saturday as we will be celebrating Father's Day with our customers. We will have DJ Sky in the house who will be entertaining you while you are doing your shopping. Make sure to catch on the specials we have and to take advantage of the tasting of some of the products we have in store especially for Father's day.

Do it Center Shaba is open from Monday to Saturday from 8AM to 8PM and on Sunday's from 9AM to 6PM.

For more information go to [www.doit.aw](http://www.doit.aw).



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## Happy Fathers Day

### A True Hero Written by Jullie Mills

This poem was inspired by a true gentleman hero, whom I was very privileged to know as my father-in-law. He passed away at the age of ninety-two in March 2012. Despite having seen the atrocities of war, he had a fondness for the good in all people and would never condemn people for their actions. He worked hard for most of his life, was active and always had a smile.

What makes a man a hero?  
I've often thought this through.  
It's someone who is macho?  
It's someone who is true?

No, that is not a hero.  
He's just a simple man.  
Always there when things go wrong  
And who does the best he can.

He lends a strong shoulder  
To ease the flow of tears  
He holds high the lantern  
To drive away your fears.

His smile was just enough  
To give encouragement  
His frown more than adequate  
To make one soon relent.

When some had need of guidance  
His ears he'd freely lend  
Advice came in abundance  
You chose, not him could you offend.

He had no need of medals  
Or glory this is true  
That's why, dear Grandpa  
Our hero has to be you.



### Silent, Strong Dad Written by Karen K. Boyer

He never looks for praises.  
He's never one to boast.  
He just goes on quietly working  
For those he loves the most.

His dreams are seldom spoken.  
His wants are very few,  
And most of the time his worries  
Will go unspoken, too.

He's there...a firm foundation  
Through all our storms of life,  
A sturdy hand to hold onto  
In times of stress and strife.

A true friend we can turn to  
When times are good or bad.  
One of our greatest blessings,  
The man that we call Dad.

In honor of Fathers Day, we want to celebrate all the fathers on their special day, by sharing with you some heartwarming and touching poems.

Poems can often express the feelings that are so hard for us to put into words. With such a special occasion, comes a great deal of special feelings and emotions towards that fatherly figure in our lives.

With these poems, we aim to along with our readers, express our love and gratitude to the father figure in our lives that we celebrate today. □

### My Dad Written by Vicky Frye

If I could write a story,  
It would be the greatest ever told.  
I'd write about my daddy,  
For he had a heart of gold.

My dad, he was no hero  
Known around this world.  
He was everything to me,  
For I was his baby girl.

I'd write about the lessons  
He taught me right from wrong.  
He instilled in me the values  
That one day I'd be strong.

He taught me to face my fears,  
Take each day as it comes,  
For there are things that we can't change  
He would say what's done is done.

He would say hold your head up high,  
Carry yourself with pride.  
Thanks to him, I am somebody,  
I will never run and hide.

If I could write a story,  
It would be the greatest ever told.  
I'd write about my daddy,  
For he had a heart of gold.





# The reserve requirement was raised by two percentage points as of the 1st of May 2022 in order to further mop up commercial banks' excess liquidity

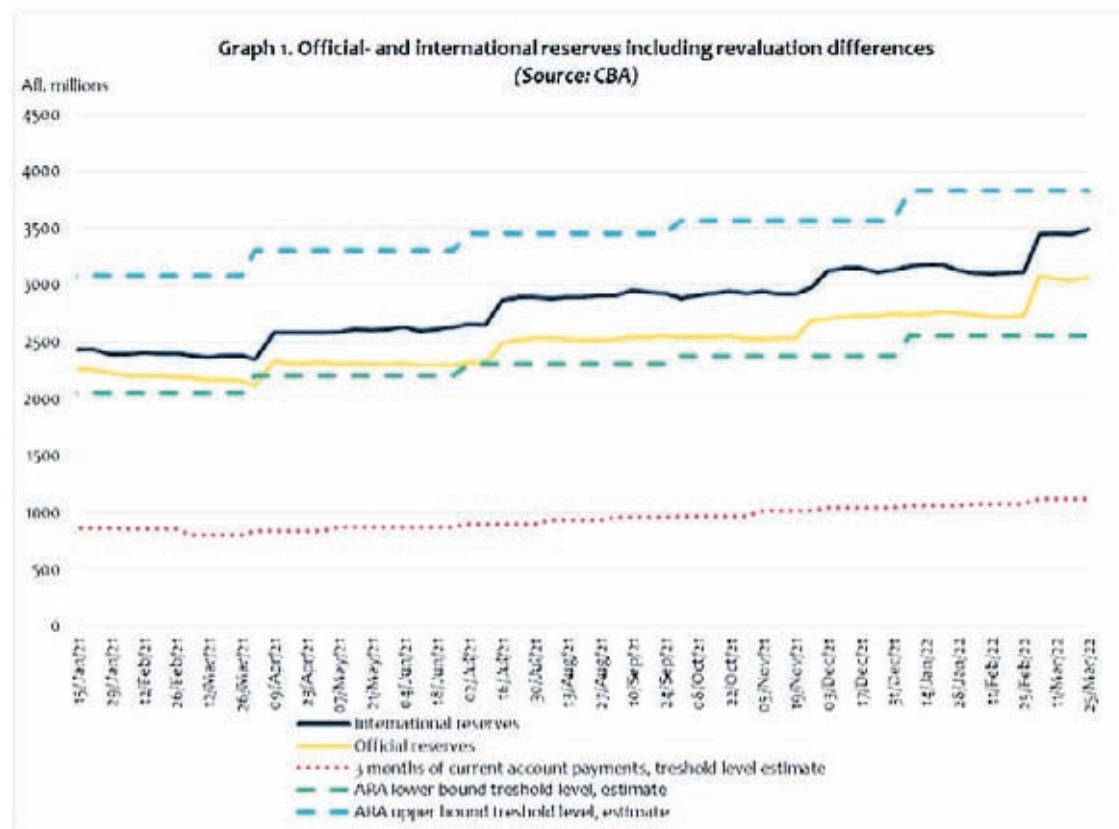
During its meeting of April 13, 2022, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Centrale Bank van Aruba (CBA) decided to raise the reserve requirement rate from 18.0 percent to 20.0 percent as of May 1st, 2022. This decision was primarily based on the persistent elevated level of excess liquidity at the commercial banks, as well as the continued rise in inflationary pressures.

The following information and analysis were considered in reaching this decision:

## International reserves

International reserves, comprising the official reserves of the CBA and foreign exchange reserves held by the commercial banks, strengthened by Afl. 362.2 million. The component of official reserves (including revaluation differences of gold and foreign exchange holdings) grew by Afl. 319.7 million on March 25, 2022, compared to end-December 2021. Consequently, on March 25, 2022, the official reserves and the international reserves (including revaluation differences of gold and foreign exchange holdings) stood at Afl. 3,064.6 million and Afl. 3,491.8 million, respectively. For the remainder of 2022, further expansions in international reserves are likely on account of foreign exchange inflows from tourism activities, foreign borrowings, and foreign direct investments.

As a result, international reserves are anticipated to



Graph 1: Developments in official and international reserves

stay well-above the benchmark of 3 months of current account payments (including oil) for the remainder of 2022. Official reserves will also stay within an acceptable range if the IMF ARA metric is applied.

## Inflation

In February 2022, the year-over-year CPI rose by 3.5 percent, compared to the corresponding month a year earlier, up from 3.3 percent end-January 2022. This hike was caused mainly by gasoline prices, impacting thereby the 'transport' component (+1.5 percentage points contribution). Gains in other components also drove up inflation, i.e., 'household operation' (0.3 percentage point contribution), 'recreation and culture' (0.3 percentage point contribution), 'miscellaneous goods and servic-

es' (0.3 percentage point contribution), 'clothing and footwear' (0.2 percentage point contribution), 'restaurant and hotels' (0.2 percentage point contribution), and 'housing' (0.1 percentage point contribution). The 12-month average inflation for February 2022 climbed to 1.7 percent, and is expected to continue to increase throughout 2022. This expectation is based on the rising price level particularly in the United States and Europe, which is the result of (1) the war in Ukraine, and (2) the ongoing logistical problems hampering production and the supply chain. Meanwhile, in February 2022, core inflation reached 1.8 percent on a

year-over-year basis and 0.3 percent on 12-month average basis.

## Commercial bank liquidity

Aggregated excess liquidity fell from Afl. 1,320.5 million in December 2021 to Afl. 1,271.0 million in February 2022. This drop in excess liquidity was mainly due to the one percentage point uptick in the reserve requirement on the 1st of January 2022 and, subsequently, another one percentage point increase in the reserve requirement on the 1st of February 2022. Nevertheless, the level of excess liquidity remained significantly above pre-pandemic levels. The elevated level of excess liquidity is the result of the

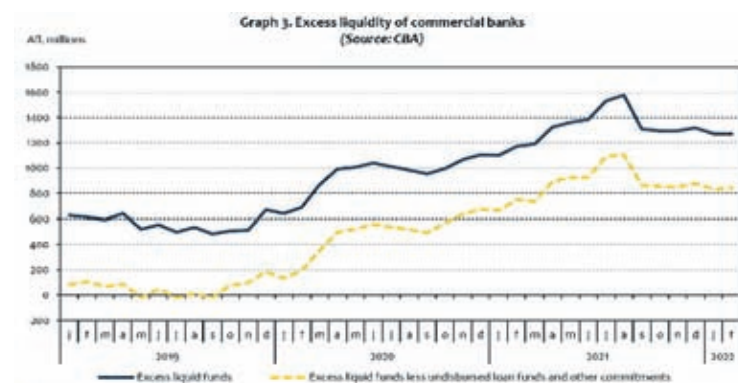
continued subdued credit demand at local commercial banks, in addition to a heightened level of liquid funds held by commercial banks.

## Credit developments

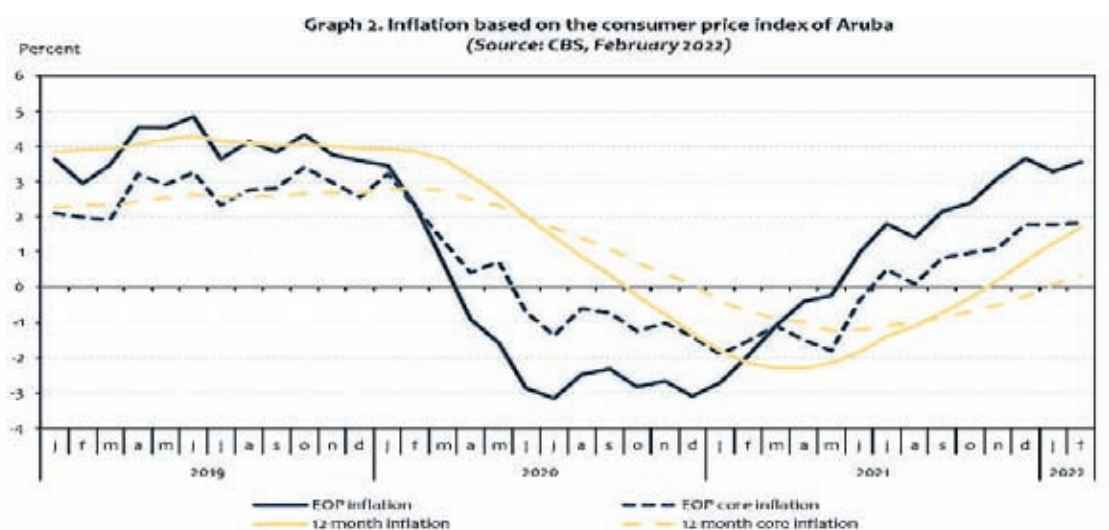
In February 2022, total credit of the commercial banks contracted by Afl. 43.6 million or 1.1 percent to Afl. 3,781.3 million, when compared to December 2021. This decline was mostly caused by a downturn in 'business loans' (Afl. 31.0 million/2.1 percent), which largely resulted from dwindling term loans with a maturity longer than 2 years (Afl. 34.7 million/4.2 percent) and current account loans (Afl. 12.3 million/8.2 percent). Furthermore, the component 'other' put downward pressure on overall credit during the period under review, as it declined by Afl. 14.1 million or 3.3 percent. For the remainder of 2022, credit is expected to stay relatively flat.

## Developments in commercial bank deposits

In February 2022, overall deposits stood at a level of Afl. 5,073.4 million, down marginally from Afl. 5,079.0 million registered at December 2021. Time deposits lessened by Afl. 69.7 million compared to December 2021. On the other hand, both demand deposits (Afl. 59.2 million) and savings (Afl. 4.8 million) climbed in February 2022.



Graph 3: Excess liquidity developments



Graph 2: Inflation developments



# T-shirts? Ice cream? Retailers cash in on Juneteenth

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO

AP Retail Writer

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Retailers and marketers have been quick to commemorate Juneteenth with an avalanche of merchandise from ice cream to T-shirts to party cups.

But many are getting backlash on social media for what critics say undermines the day, designated as a federal holiday last year to honor the emancipation of enslaved African Americans. A search for Juneteenth items among online sellers like Amazon and J.C. Penney produced everything from toothpicks with pan-African flags to party plates and balloons.

Walmart, the nation's largest retailer, apologized last month after getting slammed for a Juneteenth ice cream flavor — swirled red velvet and cheesecake — under its store label Great Value. Walmart said it's reviewing its product assortment and will remove items "as appropriate." As of Friday, Walmart's site was still offering lots of T-shirts and party plates.

Meanwhile, the Indianapolis Children's Museum removed a Juneteenth watermelon salad from its menu and issued a mea culpa earlier this week. In a statement posted on its Facebook page, the museum blamed a lapse in vendor oversight, noting the label and salad were not reviewed by museum staff. "We are an imperfect institution, but we are committed to improvement and will work tirelessly to regain your trust," the museum wrote on its Facebook page.

The backlash comes as



**A man holds an African-American flag during a demonstration in Chicago on June 19, 2020, to mark Juneteenth, the holiday celebrating the day in 1865 that enslaved black people in Galveston, Texas, learned they had been freed from bondage, more than two years after the Emancipation Proclamation.**

companies promised after the police killing of George Floyd in May of 2020 to no longer stay silent and vowed to take an active role in confronting and educating customers and employees on systemic racism. According to the preliminary results of a survey by Mercer of 200 employers, 33% are offering Juneteenth as a paid holiday to their staff. That's up from 9% last year in a survey of more than 400 companies conducted shortly before Juneteenth was declared a federal holiday.

At the same time, many have cashed in on a holiday that Black Americans have observed since June 19, 1865, when Union Major General Gordon Granger proclaimed freedom for enslaved people in Galveston, Texas, in alignment with President Abraham

Lincoln's 1863 Emancipation Proclamation.

Many experts believe that if retailers and other marketers plan to recognize the day, they should either sell merchandise from Black-owned businesses or invest in campaigns that would help Black communities. Amazon, for instance, does have a Black-owned business storefront that's live all year-round for customers who want to support and shop Black-owned businesses selling on the site.

"This is a serious and reflective moment — I am excited and grateful for the recognition," said Ramon Manning, chairman of the board at Emancipation Park Conservancy, a non-profit organization aimed to restore the park, which was purchased in 1872 by a group of former enslaved people to commemorate

the anniversary of their emancipation.

"However, I feel like it is also brought back everybody else out of the woodwork who are opportunists more so than folks who are looking at the history of this country and looking at where a group of people have come from," he added.

Manning, who is also founder and chairman of Ridgegate Capital, a private investment fund, further wondered: "Who is this going to benefit?" Sheryl Daija, founder and CEO of Bridge, a group of marketing and diversity, equity and inclusion executives, noted there's a disconnect between the seriousness of the holiday and the merchandise on display.

"A lot of companies have good intentions, but unfor-

tunately good intentions can go awry, and this is what we have seen," said Daija, who found Walmart's Juneteenth ice cream particularly egregious because it used the holiday moniker to brand a new ice cream flavor.

Companies have a long history of commercializing holidays and other moments in order to cash in. Take Cinco de Mayo, which has become in the U.S. a celebration of all things Mexican, with companies selling everything from beans to beer to sombrero hats. The holiday has spread from the American Southwest, even though most have no idea about its original ties to the U.S. Civil War, abolition and promotion of civil rights for Blacks. In fact, it's often mistaken for Mexican Independence day.

Meanwhile, every October, retailers are awash in pink merchandise to celebrate Breast Cancer Awareness month, but critics say many make misleading claims about supporting cancer groups. And Memorial Day, a federal holiday day designated to mourn the U.S. military who have died while serving in the U.S. armed forces, has morphed into all-day mattress sales at stores.

But what makes the move by companies to cash in on Juneteenth worse is that it comes as the U.S. remains fraught with racial tensions, said Darnise Martin, clinical associate professor of African American studies at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles.

"It is weird to merchandise around it, but that's what America does," Martin said. □

## FAA says future planes will need to reduce carbon emissions

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — The Biden administration proposed Wednesday that future planes produce lower levels of greenhouse gas emissions before they can be certified by federal regulators.

The Federal Aviation Administration proposal would increase fuel-efficiency standards for jets and large turboprop and propeller-driven planes that it has not yet certified

and planes built after Jan. 1, 2028. FAA said the rule, if made final, would cover new large airliners from both Boeing and Airbus, plus various business jets and other planes. The FAA said the rule would bring the United States in line with carbon dioxide emission standards set by the United Nation's aviation organization.

The rule would not cover planes

that are already flying.

Planes are a small but growing contributor to greenhouse gas emissions that are tied to climate change. The FAA said civilian planes caused 3% of U.S. emissions before the pandemic.

Boeing and Airbus said they support efforts to reduce carbon emissions. Boeing praised the FAA's approach of considering a variety of

measures — aerodynamics, engine technology, and lighter weight — to improve efficiency.

Environmentalists have spent years pushing the government to regulate limits on heat-trapping emissions from planes. In 2015, the Environmental Protection Agency determined that aircraft emissions posed a health threat, a step that required EPA to draft rules. □



# CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 38 Set off
  - 1 June honoree
  - 7 Regarding
  - 11 Steep gully
  - 12 Not barefoot
  - 13 Fashioned
  - 14 In need of a massage
  - 15 London paper
  - 16 Future bucks
  - 17 Bit of funding
  - 18 Brazilian dances
  - 19 Mile or meter
  - 21 Lupino of film
  - 22 Celeb stalker
  - 25 Negative link
  - 26 Sub spot
  - 27 Chooses to participate
  - 29 Ship's front
  - 33 Henry VIII's house
  - 34 Healer Barton
  - 35 Guinness of film
  - 36 James Clavell book
  - 37 Poster holder
- DOWN**
- 1 Extreme diets
  - 2 Band-leader Shaw
  - 3 "Go ahead, ask"
  - 4 In hiding
  - 5 Potato parts
  - 6 Fishing pole
  - 7 Tea-growing region
  - 8 What Variety covers
  - 9 Transport to Oz
  - 10 Black Sea port
  - 16 Deadly
  - 18 Squad car sound
  - 20 Lowest point
  - 22 Hot
  - 23 Chrysler Building's style
  - 24 Cable ride
  - 25 Create marginalia
  - 28 Wallops
  - 30 Swift
  - 31 Make a speech
  - 32 Diminished
  - 34 Hamster holder
  - 36 Pewter component

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Yesterday's answer

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6-18

A X Y D L B A A X R  
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

6-18

CRYPTOQUOTE

M Y P Y P Z I M D K Z K Z M Y P I

G W M Y P R Z W M P I N G P I P

D K O Z M X I P. — Z O M D G O P

K I Z O J D G W N I P E D W M

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: IF THE GARBAGE MAN CALLS, TELL HIM WE DON'T WANT ANY. — GROUCHO MARX

## McCartney marks 80th birthday with Springsteen, 60,000 pals



Paul McCartney performs during his "Got Back" tour Thursday, June 16, 2022, at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, N.J.

Associated Press

By DAVID BAUDER  
AP Entertainment Writer  
EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. (AP)

— Hard to think of a better way for Paul McCartney to celebrate his 80th birthday than by singing "Glory Days" onstage with Bruce Springsteen or being serenaded by some 60,000 well-wishers.

That's right, the "cute Beatle" turns 80 on Saturday. It's one of those cultural milestones that bring a sharp intake of breath — has it been THAT long? — along with an appreciation of what he still has to offer.

For it has been more than a half-century now since the Beatles broke up, a realization that hits you like that 1970s-era joke about young people saying, "Paul McCartney was in a band before Wings?"

Like several other members of the "hope I die before I get old" generation, including Bob Dylan, the Rolling Stones and former Beatles mate Ringo Starr, McCartney keeps working, keeps sharing his music from the stage. Another 1960s icon, Brian Wilson of the Beach Boys, is scheduled to play

at the Starlight Theatre in Kansas City on his 80th birthday Monday.

"He has a youthful exuberance that is ageless," said Bob Spitz, a Beatles biographer. "There's still some of that 21-year-old boy that shines through in all of his performances."

It would be a cliché — and wrong — to suggest time hasn't taken a toll. The fragility in his voice was evident while singing "Blackbird" on Thursday night at MetLife Stadium, the final night of a brief U.S. tour. He struggled for the high notes in "Here Today," his love letter to John Lennon, who was robbed of a long life by an assassin's bullet.

The skill of a sympathetic band, along with the imagination and voices in the audience, patches over the rough spots.

"Yeah, yeah, right, I've got a birthday coming up," McCartney said, scanning signs in the audience that reminded him. "I'm not trying to ignore it, but..."

The crowd offered a spontaneous "Happy Birthday" serenade, even before Jersey guy Jon Bon Jovi

brought out a fistful of balloons during the encore to lead them in another verse. That other Jersey guy, Springsteen, joined McCartney for the duet on "Glory Days" and a version of "I Wanna Be Your Man." He later popped up to join the guitar duel from "Abbey Road."

For most artists, the appearance of such local royalty would be a hard-to-top moment. Most artists can't immediately whip out "Let it Be" and "Hey Jude" to follow it.

To mark the birthday, Stereogum magazine asked 80 artists to pick their favorite McCartney song, and the choices were remarkable in their breadth — from the pre-Beatles 1958 cut "In Spite of All the Danger" (which McCartney performed at MetLife) to his 2016 collaboration with Rihanna and Kanye West "FourFiveSeconds" (which he didn't).

David Crosby and Dan Auerbach of the Black Keys both chose "Eleanor Rigby." Master showman Wayne Coyne of the Flaming Lips picked "Magical Mystery Tour." Steve Earle selected "Every Night," while Def Leppard's Joe Elliott went against type with the gentle "Little Lamb Dragonfly." Mac DeMarco picked the "Ram" epic, "The Back Seat of My Car."

Many remarked upon the unfairness of having to pick just one.

Stereogum's feature illustrated the varied entry points musicians of different generations have into a living, breathing catalog. For example, it revealed that a largely overlooked album like 1980's "McCartney II" had a far greater impact on developing artists than its reception at the time would have foreshadowed.

On Friday, McCartney's team announced that it was packaging "McCartney II" with his other DIY albums, "McCartney" of 1970 and 2020's "McCartney III," into a boxed set that will go on sale in August. □

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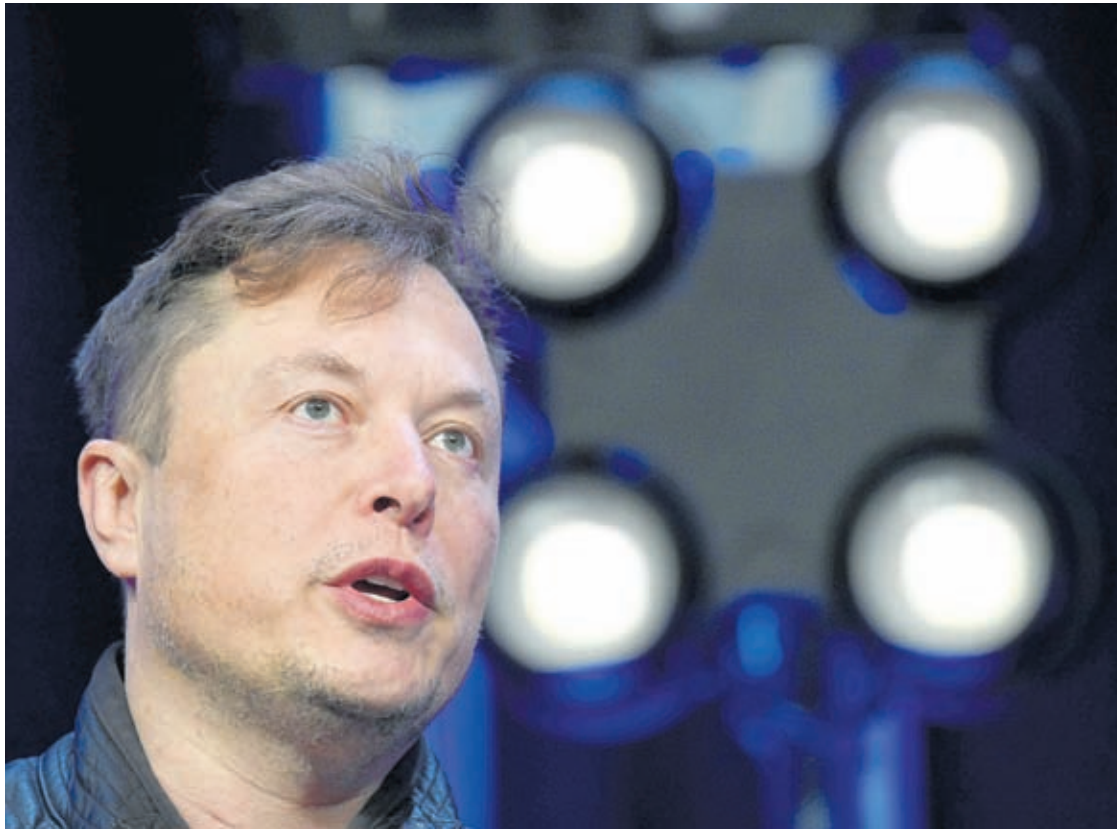
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# SpaceX reported to fire employees critical of CEO Elon Musk



Elon Musk speaks at the SATELLITE Conference and Exhibition March 9, 2020, in Washington.  
Associated Press

**HAWTHORNE, Calif. (AP)** — SpaceX, the rocket ship company run by Tesla CEO Elon Musk, has fired several employees involved in an open letter that blasted the colorful billionaire for his behavior, according to media reports.

The reports published Friday cited an email from Gwynne Shotwell, SpaceX's president, saying the company had terminated employees who put together and circulated the letter. The letter writers denounced Musk for actions that they said are a "frequent source of distraction and embarrassment for us, particularly in recent weeks."

The New York Times was the first outlet to report the purge, based on information from three employees familiar with the situation. The employees were not named.

It's unclear how many SpaceX workers lost their jobs, but Shotwell left no doubt that the company believed they had crossed an unacceptable line.

"The letter, solicitations and general process made employees feel uncomfortable, intimidated and bullied, and/or angry because the letter pressured them to

sign onto something that did not reflect their views," Shotwell wrote in her email, according to the Times. "We have too much critical work to accomplish and no need for this kind of overreaching activism."

The firings occurred Thursday — the same day Musk addressed Twitter employees for the first time about his \$44 billion deal to add that social media service to his business empire. The purchase is in limbo while Musk tries to determine whether Twitter has been concealing the number of

fake accounts on its platform.

As the Twitter drama unfolded, another report emerged that Musk had paid \$250,000 to a flight attendant to quash a potential sexual harassment lawsuit against him. Musk denied the sexual harassment allegations, and Shotwell last month sent out an email to SpaceX employees saying she believed the accusations were false.

In recent weeks, Musk has also crudely mocked the looks of Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates on Twitter

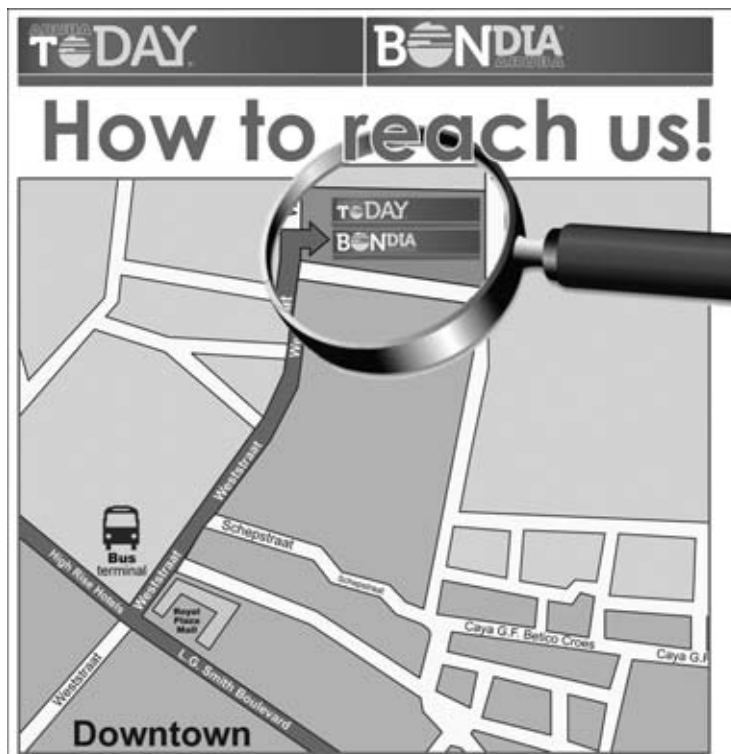
and posted a poop emoji during an online discussion with Twitter CEO Parag Agrawal.

The open letter from SpaceX employees criticizing Musk asserted that some of his tweets sent out to his 98 million followers cast the company in a poor light.

"As our CEO and most prominent spokesperson, Elon is seen as the face of SpaceX — every tweet that Elon sends is a de facto public statement by the company," the open letter said. "It is critical to make clear to our teams and to our potential talent pool that his messaging does not reflect our work, our mission, or our values." □

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# Warriors cap title run, NBA flips the page to 2022-23 season

By TIM REYNOLDS  
AP Basketball Writer

A parade awaits in San Francisco to celebrate the champion Golden State Warriors. The NBA draft is a few days away, with presumed top-three picks Jabari Smith, Chet Holmgren and Paolo Banchero set to take their first steps toward realizing their enormous potential. Free agency starts in less than two weeks.

The 2021-22 NBA season is over.

The 2022-23 NBA season seems like it's already here. The Warriors are back on the NBA mountaintop. Their win over the Boston Celtics in this season's finals capped the league's 75th anniversary celebration and ushered in an off-season that will, as always, start with tons of attention on player movement — or, in some cases, players not moving.

Two-time reigning MVP Nikola Jokic is eligible to receive a \$260 million supermax extension from the Denver Nuggets; it's basically a sure thing that it'll be offered and accepted. Phoenix's Devin Booker and Minnesota's Karl-Anthony Towns are in line for \$210 million extensions, neither of which will be surprises either.

Then there's the class of younger players in line to secure their first post-rook-



Golden State Warriors guard Stephen Curry, center, holds up the Bill Russell Trophy for most valuable player after the Warriors defeated the Boston Celtics in Game 6 to win basketball's NBA Finals championship, Thursday, June 16, 2022, in Boston.

Associated Press

ie-contract paydays: Memphis' Ja Morant, Miami's Tyler Herro, New York's R.J. Barrett and Cleveland's Darius Garland are just some of the names in that group.

So, too, is New Orleans' Zion Williamson, which will be an interesting case since he has been healthy enough to play in only 85 games over his first three pro seasons and is constantly questioned about his conditioning.

Zach LaVine, who is expected to remain with the Chicago Bulls, headlines

the class of unrestricted free agents. Kyrie Irving, James Harden, Russell Westbrook and Bradley Beal all have player options for next season, all of them worth between \$34 million and \$43 million.

And then there's LeBron James, about to enter his 20th season — likely the one where he'll catch Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and become the NBA's all-time scoring leader — and soon to be eligible for a two-year extension with the Los Angeles Lakers that'll be worth nearly \$100 million for the

2023-24 and 2024-25 seasons.

"When we get to that point, we'll see," James said when the Lakers' season ended. That point isn't here yet. But it's coming.

## THE FAVORITES

According to FanDuel Sportsbook, the Warriors are the favorites to win the 2023 title — just ahead of the Celtics.

Brooklyn is the third choice in odds posted immediately after Game 6 of this year's finals ended, followed by Milwaukee and the Los Angeles Clippers — who get

Kawhi Leonard back next season. Phoenix, Miami, Philadelphia, Memphis and Dallas round out the top 10 in the odds posted by FanDuel.

Of course, take any prediction right now with a grain of salt.

When last season ended Brooklyn was the runaway favorite to win the 2022 NBA title. The Nets didn't win a playoff game, getting swept by the Celtics in Round 1.

The second choice by sportsbooks after last season was the Los Angeles Lakers. They didn't even make the playoffs and struggled by almost all possible measures.

For the record, the Warriors had top-five odds of winning this year's title by most oddsmakers when last season ended at around 12-1. The Celtics were in the middle of the pack, at around 40-1.

## SUMMER LEAGUE

All 30 teams will be in Las Vegas from July 7-17 for the NBA Summer League, which — before the pandemic slowed momentum — was routinely drawing big crowds, and the belief is it'll get back to that again this summer.

There are two other smaller events, hosted by the Warriors and the Utah Jazz, before the Vegas league.

## RULE CHANGE

Farewell, take foul. □

# AP source: Commanders fined for excessive practice contact



Washington Commanders cornerbacks Benjamin St-Juste, right, and Josh Drayden (38) practice during an NFL football practice at Inova Sports Performance Center in Ashburn, Va., Wednesday, June 8, 2022.

Associated Press

By STEPHEN WHYNO

AP Sports Writer

A person with knowledge of the decision said the NFL has fined the Washington Commanders \$100,000 and stripped the team of two offseason workouts next year because of excessive contact in practice among players.

The person spoke to The Associated Press on Friday on condition of anonymity because the league did not announce the disciplinary move.

The fine, which was first reported by ESPN, applies to coach Ron Rivera, who was incensed by one particular hit during organized team activities to the point

he stopped practice to lecture his team. Safety Jeremy Reaves made significant contact with second-year receiver Dyami Brown during practice without pads June 8.

"We just got to be careful and work with each other," Rivera said afterward. "The last thing we want is somebody to be hurt."

The fine and loss of 2023 OTA practice time is the latest off-field development for the Commanders after assistant Jack Del Rio was fined \$100,000 for downplaying the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol. Virginia lawmakers tabled plans

for a stadium bill, and a lawyer for Dan Snyder told Congress the team's owner would not testify at a hearing next week.

Dallas coach Mike McCarthy was fined \$100,000 and the club was stripped of one offseason practice next year because of practices deemed too physical by the NFL, owner Jerry Jones confirmed.

It's the second consecutive year the Cowboys were punished for offseason practice violations. Last year, McCarthy was fined \$50,000 and the team was docked \$100,000 and one 2022 workout. □



# Masters champ Scheffler gives U.S. Open some name recognition

By DOUG FERGUSON

AP Golf Writer

BROOKLINE, Mass. (AP) —

The idea of the U.S. Open being open to all doesn't stop with qualifying for the right to just play the toughest test in golf.

Another day brought another surprise to The Country Club when Nick Hardy — technically the last player into the 156-man field — pieced together a 2-under 68 on Friday to share the lead with Masters champion Scottie Scheffler among the early starters.

This came one day after Adam Hadwin — who got in as an alternate just eight days before the start of the championship — held the 18-hole lead.

This is not unusual for a U.S. Open, which a year ago had Richard Bland of England in the mix.

"Couldn't be a better start," said Hardy, who qualified for two U.S. Opens while playing at Illinois, where he was a Big Ten champion.

And it couldn't have been a quicker exit for Phil Mickelson, who at least delighted fans with big birdies — 45 feet on No. 5, nearly 60 feet on No. 6 — that only helped him salvage a 73. He still missed the cut for the second time in three years at the U.S. Open.

The next stop is Oregon in two weeks for the next Saudi-backed LIV event.

Among afternoon starters, there was another mixture of contenders — two-time major champion Collin Morikawa and David Lingmerth, who earned his spot as an alternate from U.S. Open qualifying, were setting the afternoon pace by reaching 5 under.

At one point, Lingmerth and Tarren Callum of England were atop the leaderboard. Their combined world ranking: 908.

Rory McIlroy proved the U.S. Open treats everyone the same, not always good news. He had to take three hacks out of waist-high fescue to get on the green and then made a 25-foot putt for a double bogey.

A warning for potential bad weather instead brought warm sunshine and slightly

stronger wind, so much that the USGA began to sprinkle water on the greens between the morning and afternoon waves to keep the putting surfaces from getting too quick.

Scheffler and his best friend and housemate this week, Sam Burns, provided the name recognition among the early starters.

Scheffler made a pair of soft bogeys early in his round until he burst to the top by chipping in from deep rough for eagle on the par-5 14th, adding one more birdie and posting a 67.

Scheffler and Hardy were at 3-under 137, with Burns (67), Matt Fitzpatrick (70) and Hadwin (72) another shot behind. Burns has three PGA Tour wins over the last nine months and has risen



Nick Hardy putts on the fifth hole during the second round of the U.S. Open golf tournament at The Country Club, Friday, June 17, 2022, in Brookline, Mass.

Associated Press

to No. 9 in the world.

"Two silly bogeys early in the round, but outside of that I hit it really good," Scheffler said. "I was in position most of the day. If a few more putts would have fallen in versus around the

edge, it would have been a really special day. But 3 under was a good score for me, especially being 2 over through 6."

There could have been cause for alarm early in his round, especially after

Scheffler had missed the cut in his previous major at the PGA Championship. Only the 25-year-old from Dallas doesn't dwell on the past, and he spends even less time thinking about the future.

He has the game for any course — Scheffler has four wins this year, including the Masters — and his steady demeanor is a particularly good fit for the U.S. Open. Strange things can happen at this championship, and they did.

MJ Daffue of South Africa opened with four birdies on the front nine and became the first player to reach 6-under par for the U.S. Open. Then the bogeys began to arrive, including one on the par-5 14th when he played a shot from the concession area. □



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